

Middle Fork Goodnews River weir, 2003

Abstract: Salmon returning to the Goodnews River support subsistence, commercial, and sport fisheries annually near the community of Good news Bay in Southwest Alaska. The Alaska Department of Fish and Game, in cooperation with the US Fish and Wildlife Service, operates an adult salmon weir on the Middle Fork Goodnews River, in an effort to ensure future sustainability of this resource.

A resistance-board weir was used to enumerate five species of Pacific salmon and Dolly Varden migrating into the Middle Fork Goodnews River in 2003. A total of 2,389 Chinook, 44,387 sockeye, 21,637 chum, 1,192 pink, 52,810 coho salmon, and 1,949 Dolly Varden were observed passing the weir from June 18th through September 18th. A live trap was used to collect samples from Chinook, sockeye, chum, and coho salmon throughout their respective runs, to characterize the age, sex, and length composition of each population. The Chinook salmon run was 41.5% female and 44.1% age 1.3 fish. The sockeye salmon run was 45.6% female and 86.6% age 1.3 fish. The chum salmon run was 45.6% female and 84.5% age 0.3 fish. The coho salmon run was 44 % female and 87.1% age 2.1 fish.

Weir escapement, aerial survey, and harvest data were combined to estimate run abundances for the Goodnews River drainage. When compared with returns over the last 10 years the 2003 return was below average for Chinook salmon, near average for sockeye salmon, and below average for chum salmon. Coho salmon run abundance was not estimated but commercial catch data from District W-5 and a high weir escapement suggest an above average return.

Citation: Stewart, R. 2004. Middle Fork Goodnews River weir, 2003. U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Office of Subsistence Management, Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program, 2003 Annual Report (Study No. 00-019). Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Commercial Fisheries Division, Regional Information Report No. 3A04-20, Anchorage, Alaska.